

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
March 22, 2016

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m.

INVOCATION: Chief Petruch requested a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Mrs. Miano and Mrs. Uzelac were absent. All other members were present.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REMONSTRATIONS:

President Hardaway read a Proclamation for the 195th Anniversary of Greek Independence Day. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of the Accounts Payable Register Voucher dated March 22, 2016. Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2016. Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

BUDGET & FINANCE: Mr. Pettit had no report.

PUBLIC WORKS:

Mr. Spann stated the railroad tracks on 62nd need maintenance once again. Mr. Spires said the State of Indiana handles this and has already been notified of the situation. Mr. Pettit inquired about the 2016 Spring Clean Up program. The pick-up schedule is listed in the Town Newsletter and starts the week of April 4th. A brief discussion took place regarding the curb program occurring around town.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS:

Mrs. Uzelac was absent, no report. President Hardaway requested Mr. Bushemi to compose an ordinance that prohibits windows from being boarded up with plywood. The plywood boards are visibly an eye sore. There are other materials that can be used that are just as sturdy as plywood, and more pleasing to the eye. The ordinance should cover the Broadway corridor as well as U.S. Route 30. Discussion followed, including possibly enacting the ordinance throughout the Town including residential as well as commercial properties.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS: Mrs. Barron had no report.

PUBLIC SAFETY: Mrs. Uzelac was absent, no report.

PARKS & RECREATION:

Ms. LaMarca referred to Jan Orlich for report. Ms. Orlich informed the Council about the passing of former Parks Director, James Mahoney. The Mahoney Family donated a memorial tree in honor of James Mahoney. A memorial will be held on April 23, 2016 in his remembrance. Jan went on to provide various Park Department updates. Ms. Orlich asked the Council to revisit the rental rates for the Pruzin Center to offer a reduced rate for Town residents and adjust rates accordingly in an effort to maximize the hall rentals potential. Discussion followed.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS:

Mrs. Barron had no report. Mr. Lake provided various Stormwater updates regarding current projects taking place. The Stormwater Map Atlas will be indexed and paper copies will be available for all utilities.

ELECTIONS & PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Ms. LaMarca said approximately 1400 letters were sent out to Merrillville businesses seeking donations to help fund the 4th of July Parade. They have collected \$5,075 in donations so far.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Mr. Pettit provided an update related to a proposed tax abatement petition that was discussed at a prior Economic Development meeting. He also mentioned attending a meeting with colleagues and various community associates to discuss the big box stores & Senate Bill 308.

UTILITY LIAISON: Mrs. Barron had no report.

ABANDONED PROPERTIES:

President Hardaway addressed various abandoned/blight properties located on Broadway and provided an update as to how we are going to handle these locations. Discussion followed among the Council regarding prohibiting windows from being boarded up using plywood on vacant structures.

GENERAL ORDERS:

FIRST READING ORDINANCES:

Ord. 16-06: An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville Town Council amending the municipal code to permit enforcement of nuisance violations on real estate and noxious weeds violations by the unsafe buildings hearing authority. Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

Ord. 16-07: An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, amending ordinance 15-34 and fixing the salaries and pay for employees of the Town of Merrillville, Indiana for the calendar year 2016. Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

Ord. 16-08: An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, fixing the parks non-reverting program fees for the year 2016. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance with discussion to incorporate the following: Pruzin Hall Rental: (Hourly rate, min 2 hours) Resident \$20.00 Non-Resident \$40.00 Security: Discretion of Parks Director; Security Deposit: Resident \$100.00 Non-Resident \$100.00

The motion was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no further discussion. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote. Mr. Pettit made a motion to suspend the rules and allow for the second reading to take place at today's meeting. Mrs. Spann seconded the motion to suspend the rules. There was no discussion. The motion to suspend the rule for second reading was carried by a unanimous voice vote.

Ord. 16-09: An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, appropriating additional monies within the Merrillville Fire Territory Cumulative Equipment Fund, of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana for the year 2016 not included in the current budget. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

SECOND READING ORDINANCES:

Ord. 16-08: An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, fixing the parks non-reverting program fees for the year 2016. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion or public comment. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

RESOLUTIONS:

Res. 16-10: A Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Merrillville, Indiana, approving the issuance of certain Town of Merrillville Redevelopment District special taxing district bonds and other related matters. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the resolution and was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

BZA ACTIONS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Students from Merrillville High School made a presentation to the Town Council seeking support for a project they are planning titled Joining Forces for Autism. They are a self-driven leadership group looking to host an event that would make a positive impact on our community. This program is affiliated with Chic-Fil-A and is designed to bring together the community with the first responder forces. All donations and proceeds will go to Autism Speech Foundation. Discussion regarding the details of the project followed. Mr. Pettit made a motion to donate \$500 toward the project and if schedule permits to host the event at Pruzin Center. They anticipate the event to take place on April 30, 2016 from 1-3 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no further discussion. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

David Wright, Planning and Marketing Manager from Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) spoke about the memorandum of agreement between GPTC and the Town of Merrillville that was presented at a prior Town Council workshop. He proceeded to make a presentation to the Town Council requesting matching funds for a transit improvement shelter project. Discussion regarding the details followed. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the memorandum of agreement with GPTC and also to allocate \$28,000 out of the casino funds as a match for the shelter project. Mr. Spann seconded the motion. Members of the Council asked for assurance that the funds would not exceed \$28,000, that it is a one-time amount and would not cover future maintenance of the shelters. Mr. Wright was in agreement. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote. President Hardaway said he wants to discuss with GPTC how to help residents who don't live near Broadway to get to the bus shelters and that Merrillville should be involved in this planning. Mr. Wright agreed to set up a meeting and discuss.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

All public comment is recorded on an audio file and kept on file in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office at Town Hall.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Town Hall Offices Closed (except for Emergency Services) March 25, 2016 in observance of Good Friday.
Stormwater Management Board meeting, April 5, 2016 at 4:30 p.m.
Plan Commission workshop, April 5, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.
Police Commission meeting, April 1, 2016 at 8:00 a.m.
Town Council meeting, April 12, 2016, at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Barron and seconded by Ms. LaMarca.